

Share: Keeping Music Fresh Before a Performance

Invite students to discover how pianists keep their music fresh and performance-ready. As they try creative ideas and reflect on their practice habits, they learn that staying connected to a piece is a skill they can develop, just like learning notes and rhythms.

For Group Classes

Try It: Practice Strategy Stations:

Set up 3–4 short stations, inspired directly by student practice strategies found on pages 16–17. Students rotate through stations in small groups.

- **Station 1: Story & Imagination, “Inspired by Elaine”**
 - Choose one short section of a piece.
 - Invent a story, image, or scene for that section.
 - Optional: add a few lyric words to match the phrase.
- **Station 2: Change the Sound, “Inspired by Kehkasha”**
 - Play a short section: once legato, once staccato, once with “ghost practice” (silent or barely touching keys).
 - Discuss how articulation changes the feeling.
- **Station 3: Random Starts and Memory Check, “Inspired by Ishaan”**
 - Number the sections of the piece.
 - Use dice, cards, or numbers to choose a starting place.
 - Play with or without the score.
- **Station 4: Performer’s Ears, “Inspired by Claire and Isabel”**
 - Play for a partner or small group.
 - List one detail that sounded strong and one that could be clearer.

Bring the group back together and ask: “Which strategy made the music feel the most fresh?” “Did any strategy help you notice something new in the piece?” “Which one would you use before a performance?” Encourage students to name their favorite strategy (e.g., Story Builder, Sound Explorer, Memory Detective).

For Private Lessons

Choose two strategies from pages 16–17 to explore in the lesson.

- **Option 1: Think Like a Movie Composer**
Identify each section’s mood. Who is the “character”?
- **Option 2: Change Perspective**
Start in the middle or end. Play slowly, hands separately, or with bold dynamics.
Notice what changes.

Ask: “What made the piece feel new?” “Which strategy will you try this week?” “How does a new approach change how performing feels?”

For more ideas on helping students maintain performance repertoire through creative practice strategies, such as imaginative storytelling, varied starting points, improvisation, mental rehearsal, and simulated performances—see the article by Elvina Truman Pearce and co-authors, “[How Do Your Students Practice to Maintain Contest and Recital Repertoire?](#)” in *Piano Magazine (Keyboard Companion, Autumn 2001; Vol. 12, No. 3)*.

This resource is created for use with *Piano Inspires Kids*. Visit kids.pianoinspires.com for more information and activity ideas.